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A
SERMON,
PREACHED
IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF
Beccles,
IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK,
JULY 30th, 1795,

BY THE
Rev. Francis Bowness,
RECTOR OF GUNTON, VICAR OF CORTON, AND ACTING
MAGISTRATE FOR THE SAID COUNTY,

ON THE
PRESENTATION OF THE COLOURS
TO

The Yeomanry Cavalry,
OF THE
HUNDREDS OF WANGFORD, AND MUTFORD
AND LOTHINGLAND,

AND
PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST
OF THE
COMMANDER AND THE CORPS.

YARMOUTH:
PRINTED BY I. D. DOWNES, FOR G. G. AND J.
ROBINSON, LONDON.

1795.

577

SERMON

PREACHED

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF

St. Peter's

IN THE COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

July 30th 1855

By Rev. Francis Bowness

Rector of Gunton, near Colton, and Vicar of

St. Peter's, Colton, Norfolk

On the

PRESERVATION OF THE COLOURS



THE YOUNG MAN

PRESENTED AT THE REQUEST

OF THE

COMMANDER AND THE GENT

YARMOUTH

PRINTED BY J. BOWNESS, FOR G. AND

ROBINSON, LONDON

1855

TO
Robert Sparrow, Esq.
AND
THE REST OF THE CORPS,
OF
The Yeomanry Cavalry,
OF THE
HUNDREDS OF WANGFORD,
AND
MUTFORD AND LOTHINGLAND,
IN SUFFOLK,
GENTLEMEN,
The following Discourse,
PUBLISHED AT YOUR REQUEST,
IS WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT DEDICATED
TO YOU,
BY YOUR FAITHFUL,
AND
DEVOTED SERVANT,
Francis Bowness.



TO
 Robert Sparrow, Esq.
 AND
 THE REST OF THE CORPS
 OF
 The Buffs
 HUNDREDS OF WANGFORD
 AND
 MUTTON AND LOTHINGLAND
 IN SUFFOLK



The Buffs
 IS WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT DEDICATED
 TO YOU
 BY YOUR FAITHFUL
 AND
 DEVOTED SERVANT
 Francis Bowers.

Romans xiii.—Verse 1. former Part.

LET EVERY SOUL BE SUBJECT TO THE HIGHER
POWERS.

THE remarkable energy with which St. Paul enforces the precept in the text, greatly inclines us to enquire into the cause of it. And upon due examination, we find it aimed at a mistaken opinion that had taken root, and been much cherished among his earliest converts.

These had persuaded themselves, that the *profession of christianity* exempted them from all obedience to *civil authority*,—that human laws were needless, and of course, that the executors of them were a burden to society.

As mankind have been too ready upon all occasions, to decry the necessity of every establishment that they are unwilling to submit to, it is possible such

a *notion* might spring from the depravity of our nature. Yet that charity, which "hopeth all things," induces us to trace it up to a different fountain. To a benevolent persuasion of such a change being produced in the dispositions of men by the religion of Jesus; and that his revelation pointed out so clear a connection between their *duty* and their *interest*, that every other barrier against wickedness would be vain and unavailing.

Should we for a moment listen to one fully possessed with this persuasion, descanting from a peaceful solitude upon the texture and formation of the world, we might hear him represent it as the work of an infinitely perfect architect, and, consequently, infinitely perfect; his language would lead us to suppose, that every creature in it was made capable of answering the end of it's creation, and that all contributed in some degree to the welfare of man, it's supreme inhabitant. Man we should hear described as a being of few wants, and amply furnished with the means of satisfying them;—enjoined, indeed, some duties, but only such as must terminate in his advantage; endowed
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with a distinguishing faculty,—stimulated with an ardent desire after happiness, and, by a light from heaven made fully acquainted with the way that leads to *happiness eternal*. Readily, therefore, would he conclude, that, to confine him in a road which both reason and interest prompt him to pursue, all *human* obligations are absolutely needless.

So might the traveller by the side of a river, calm and unruffled, under the influence of a serene sky, pronounce those munitious that guard it's streams—the effects of groundless caution. But on a second view, let him behold it agitated with turbulent winds, and swollen with coinciding torrents, let him see the angry waves rebelling against the opposing banks, threatening destruction to the neighbouring flocks, and desolation to the adjoining pastures, and then he will acknowledge the utility of human art in restraining it's impetuous rage.

Thus, if we draw our recluse from his place of retirement, and present him with a survey of the world in a social and civilized state, which (in spite of the

learned labours of a late ingenious *declaimer) seems the best calculated to answer the necessities of man. Of a world enlightened too by a revelation from heaven, one transient view will immediately furnish him with this sorrowful conviction, that the beautiful fabric which he had erected, stood upon the sandy foundation of mere conjecture.

That, notwithstanding he is introduced to beings, boasting of reason, and impressed by God himself, with the knowledge and expediency of mercy and justice, yet he frequently hears of the *weak* labouring under the oppression of the *strong*,—of the *artless* spoiled by the craft of the *designing*, and the blood of murdered innocence crying aloud for vengeance. Let him consult the history of any community, and he will find that treachery, rapine, and bloodshed, make up no inconsiderable part of it. And on such a prospect he must allow that the utmost exertion of human contrivance, was necessary to check as much as possible such outrages on humanity.

But,

* J. J. Rousseau Diss. on the Inequality among Mankind.

But, does not this supposed necessity, it might be urged, imply a reflection on God the creator and governor of this system? Does not this seeming imperfection in the work argue an imperfection in the artificer? God forbid.

Let the skilful builder, who with proper symmetry and proportion could plan and erect a stately palace, be employed to construct the humble dwelling of a lowly peasant; if it be properly adapted to the condition of the inhabitant, can the ability of the architect be questioned, although it be destitute of magnificent ornaments? Or if many conveniences in it are overlooked or perverted to a wrong use, can this reflect upon the skill and wisdom of the contriver?

The Almighty when he formed this world, made it not for angels but for men.—For men intended for a state of trial. And our idea of such a state is *this*. There must be objects from without to tempt, and inclinations from within to yield to the temptation, or otherwise as a state of trial, it would not answer the end proposed by it.

Now,

Now, therefore, if man blessed with a freedom of will, and having the promise of grace to help him in the time of need, should chuse the evil, and refuse the good, the censure lies upon himself, and the Almighty stands acquitted.

But, behold the loving kindness of the Lord! His providence foresaw the evil which it by no means occasioned. He foreknew the havock and disorder that might arise in the creation, by an abuse of this freedom in some of his creatures, and therefore (besides those great springs of action, the hopes and fears that look towards a future state of reward and punishment) hath wisely adapted other means to check and prevent them.

As in the human body there is a diversity of members fitted for the different uses that are necessary for the support and proper temperature of the whole, so the individuals of every community seem possessed of faculties and powers different both in quality and degree. Some are furnished with a capacity to plan, and others to execute. Some to contrive for the harmony
and

and peace of society, and others to put their contrivance in practice. Some, in short, to govern, and others to obey.

And in this inequality we see the goodness of God impressed in legible characters. Such a gradation supplies men qualified as rulers, "to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well." As ministers in the hand of God, to the rest for good.

And as this manifestly promotes the scheme of Providence, which tends to the ease and happiness of his creatures, civil government, inasmuch as he has adapted instruments for the necessary task, may properly be styled the ordination of God.

The injunction, therefore, of the Apostle, was urged with the greatest propriety, as well as energy. "Let every soul be subject to the higher Powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God."

And

And whether the notion was originally stamp'd on the nature of man,—whether it arose from the visible necessity and utility of such an establishment, or to whatever other cause we are to ascribe it, certain it is, that some form of government or other hath been observed by every society of human beings.

If we examine the records of nations ever so distant from us in point of time and space, though their manners and customs be lost in the dark recesses of antiquity, yet lively traces of their civil compacts and government are still apparent.

Or, if we investigate the regions of modern barbarism, we shall even there hear of national laws, rulers, and subjects,—different indeed, according to the different dispositions, or as a learned *philosopher is of opinion, perhaps, different climates of the different people,

From this general prevalence, then of rule and subordination, we may fairly presume they originated in the design and intention of the Almighty.

But

* Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws.

But for the proof of this, we need not ransack the annals of antiquity, nor penetrate the lands of barbarism. The revealed history of the Jews will sufficiently confirm it to us. That people, though under the immediate inspection and governance of God himself, had judges appointed them, to make known the statutes of God and his laws, and to decide between one and another, for the peace and regularity of the whole. Indeed, this form of government has something particular in it, inasmuch as the Almighty himself condescended to deliver the statutes that were to be observed, and to appoint a judge as his vicegerent to enforce them. Yet, we find that Moses, the first appointed judge, had authority without the divine command, to accomplish the good end of government by whatever means seemed to him the most conducive to it. At the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, he delegated a part of his power to "rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And they judged the people at all seasons. The hard causes they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

C. 18. 16. And

And some centuries after this, when the government by the desire, or rather indecent importunity of the people, was changed from the *judicial* to the *regal* form, and the Almighty manifested his disapprobation of the deed, we must not suppose that his anger was levelled at the form they made choice of, but at their wanton and unnecessary demand, namely, that "a king should reign over them, when the Lord their God was their King."

And so far was christianity from exempting the converts to it from obedience, to civil authority and human laws, that the author of it recommends the duty, both by his commands and example. Being questioned by the Jews, concerning the legality of supporting by a tribute, the government of the Romans, when he found by the impress and superscription on the tribute-money, that Cesar was the supreme guardian of their laws, he answered, "give to Cesar, the things that are Cesar's, and to God, the things that are God's." And, in one instance, rather than injure the peace of society by resistance, he himself discharged a tax unjustly demanded, even at the expence of a miracle.

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The Apostles, likewise, his immediate successors, in propagating his religion, inculcate the same doctrine. They were sensible, that in spite of the peaceful precepts of the gospel, and the objects of hope and fear in a future state, which it pointed out, there might arise instances from the nature and freedom of man, of outrage and violence—that other means were to be used to restrain, and, as much as possible, prevent these—that the Almighty had kindly provided these means in that capacity, for civil government and rule, with which he had endowed many of his creatures—that as this manifestly tended to the welfare of society, and, consequently, to promote the intention of Providence, it was justly esteemed the ordination of God. Therefore, St. Paul, speaking with reference to the heathen government of the Romans, thus enjoins his converts.

“ Let every soul be subject to the higher Powers. For
 “ there is no power but of God. The powers that be,
 “ are ordained of God. Wherefore, you must needs
 “ be subject, not only for wrath, but also for consci-
 “ ence sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also:
 “ for they are God’s ministers attending continually
 “ upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their

"dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."

Hence, it must appear, that government itself was ordained, and the means of it provided for by the Almighty. And the necessity and utility of it seem so evidently apparent, that one would imagine every human being would consider it his duty to maintain and protect it.

But a neighbouring nation hath furnished us with a melancholy conviction of this not being the case. Instead of correcting by gentle and legitimate means, those abuses in their government, which in time naturally insinuate themselves into all human systems, (for the best of them are either in the contrivance or execution imperfect) they have laid it level with the ground. "They have put down all rule, and all authority and power." And in the place of the necessary barriers against injustice, violence, and rapine, they have endeavoured to substitute an absurd system of equality and self-government.

These

of attending have endeavored to say the foundation

Notwithstanding the humane efforts of the managers

Some

Some of our fellow-subjects, not from a lack of worldly wisdom, but with a view, perhaps, to repair fortunes shattered by extravagance, under the pretence of amending, have endeavoured to sap the foundation of the constitution, and introduce confusion, hoping to glean something from the general anarchy: Whilst others, from disappointed ambition, have discovered a wish, like the blind and deluded Sampson, to pull down the pillars of the goodly fabric, although they themselves must be overwhelmed, and buried in the common ruin.

But, what is more than all to be deplored, a spirit of discontent and turbulence has been studiously instilled into the mass or bulk of the common people, in most parts of the kingdom.

Notwithstanding the humane efforts of their superiors, to satisfy their hunger and clothe their nakedness, some of the lower orders of society have manifested a disposition, like the ungrateful viper, to sting the bosoms that have warmed and cheered them.

Although

Although the *head* has employed a provident care for the inferior members, the *feet* have had the presumption to say to the head, we have no need of thee.

Nay, even the visitations of heaven they have attributed to the neglect or oppression of those that rule over them.

Because it hath pleased the Almighty to make the heavens brass, and the earth iron, that a comparative scarcity might ensue, intended, perhaps, as the correction and punishment of their own multiplied offences; instead of imploring the forgiveness of God, and a return of his favour, they have shewn a strong inclination to satisfy their wants, by purloining from the stores of their betters. We can scarce look into the chronicles of the times, but we read instances of their outrage and violence. And so complicated is their wickedness with their folly, that, not unfrequently, because they are in need, they hesitate not to destroy that provision and aliment, which might administer to their own support and nourishment.

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It is, indeed, a comfortable consideration, that there are of our fellow-subjects, (with a zeal that can never be sufficiently commended) who have voluntarily united and leagued themselves together, principally with a view to check such unwarrantable proceedings. Before some of these I am now speaking. And to them, I wish to address these few words.

The cause you are engaged in, is the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, the cause of religion, and, consequently, the cause of heaven.

If ever, therefore, your exertions be called forth, acquit yourselves like men, be strong, having a firm reliance on the co-operation of God.

And while you secure peace to your country, you may depend upon receiving that reward which the holy Jesus hath promised to the peace-makers, when he assures all his faithful servants, that "blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Now to God, the Father, the Son, &c. &c.

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F I N I S.

